



News Release

For immediate release: March 2, 2009

(09-035)

Contacts: [Cathy Franklin](#), WIC Nutrition Program
[Gordon MacCracken](#), Communications Office

360-236-3648
360-236-4072

Healthy, thrifty choices head-up new food list for WIC Nutrition Program

Changes aim at providing wholesome, cost-effective dietary combination for mothers, children

OLYMPIA — Fresh fruits and vegetables will be added to the new list of approved foods for clients of the Washington Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program. The list focuses on cost-effective options that provide the nutrition children need for a healthy start.

While fresh fruits and vegetables will be on the list for the first time, some other foods will be dropped. Products such as whole-wheat bread, brown rice, and bulgur are on the list, while some less nutritious, higher-priced goods are out.

The newly published changes will become effective October 1, 2009. The U.S. Department of Agriculture approved the list, which was submitted in October 2008.

New federal laws are designed to align foods purchased through WIC with national dietary recommendations, and to better promote and support breastfeeding. The changes will also increase the variety of foods available to WIC clients with their WIC checks, including tofu and whole-grain products.

For nutritional reasons, juice for infants and whole milk for women and for children over two years of age will no longer be provided. Because of high cost, organic milk, baby cereal, and cereals such as MultiGrain Cheerios and Special K will no longer be available.

“It’s vital that we get young mothers, their babies, and children the right variety of healthy foods,” said Dr. Maxine Hayes, pediatrician and State Health Officer. “WIC clients will be able to buy fresh produce, whole grains, and tofu with their WIC checks, while we make efficient use of our resources.”

— More —

Adding some new foods means some other foods must be either eliminated or supplied in smaller amounts. Infant formula, eggs, milk, and juice are among those products being reduced.

Washington WIC was the nation's only WIC program to allow organic milk. When it was approved eight years ago, organic milk cost only a little more than non-organic milk; now it's double the cost. Taking organic milk off the approved foods list saves money for other essential foods.

A small reduction in the amount of formula for infants after six months of age may concern parents. The organization that recommends WIC foods decided baby food should be available, and less formula should be provided for infants at six months.

"Breastfeeding is the healthiest option," said Cathy Franklin, WIC nutritionist for the Department of Health. "Infant formula is expensive and families who formula-feed their babies will have to plan for the increased cost as babies start eating more solid food."

WIC is the special supplemental nutrition program for pregnant and breastfeeding women, and for children up to age five, living below 185 percent of the poverty level. As a supplemental program, it's not intended to meet all of its clients' nutritional needs. Rather, it's a short-term prevention program designed to improve lifetime nutrition and health behaviors by helping children get a good start on healthy eating.

More information on WIC, and the complete food list, is available on the [Washington WIC Nutrition Program Web site](http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/WIC/newfoods.htm) (<http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/WIC/newfoods.htm>).

###

Visit the Washington Department of Health Web site at http://www.doh.wa.gov for a healthy dose of information.
--